

# THE OTHER SIDE.



NOT LATER

OCTOBER

NO. ONE ● SEPTEMBER '81

BEYOND THE FINAL FRONTIER



**THE SPECIALS**  
FULLEST INTERVIEW OF 1981

**KILLING JOKE**  
LIVING, LUSTING, DYING.

**AU PAIRS**  
TALKING WITH A  
DIFFERENT SEX

**LINTON KWESI  
JOHNSON**  
TOXTETH, BRIXTON AND MORE

**JOHN PEEL**  
FIRST INTERVIEW FOR  
TWO YEARS

**RONNIE SCOTT**  
A HISTORY OF HIS CLUB.



# **THE OTHER SIDE.**

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**Your - Points - Of - View.**

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**HAVE YOU ANY THING TO SAY?**

THE OTHER SIDE: Letters, The Towers, Hart Hill  
Drive, Luton LU2 0AY Beds.



# JESSICA ADAMS WRITES



**Dear Reader**

**T**hanks are due! You have made the bold choice, and bought the first edition of THE OTHER SIDE — a truly independant magazine, with no company behind it, or any "sponsors".

Others talk about "Style", but what about stylishness — black and white. All the best movies were in black and white, that's why Woody Allen made Manhattan in it.

The magazine is small at the moment, but so is any beginning. Wasn't the seed of life? Wasn't Steve Strange's artistic pretension when he was a baby? Mind, you don't know what was going on in his little head, beneath those blue-rinsed curls. You don't know what words his dampened gurgles were trying to form behind his classic, blue porcelain rattle.

His behaviour has been as outlandishly normal as ever lately — ie. copulating with a poor defenceless camel on the streets of New York. All to promote an LP, and to become famous, and so rich he can use TR7s as door wedges no-doubt! It is difficult to imagine Steve Strange being nationally famous in the big neutron bomb depot over yonder. Could you imagine him performing in one of those Mid-American clubs where they have wet-T-shirt competitions and throw beer at each other? Not exactly "Cabaret Escape From It All"!

## RUGBY

**W**asn't blue blood brother Dickie very bizarre on BBC2's 6.55 Special a while back, all that shouting about our fascist police-force. Doesn't he realise that only "left-wing extremists" criticize British bobbys?

Talking of Toxteth — I wonder what the Police contribution will be to the year of the disabled?

**A**nway. You will have noticed the front cover shots of Terry Hall. If you flick forward a bit before you read anything else there is a full page portrait in a different pose. In fact The Specials have not given such a wide, unheld back interview this year.

Talking of 'wide' interviews, the Killing Joke chat must be the longest anyone has kept them talking, EVER. It contains all Jaz's ideas, aims, and philosophies. All you normally get from Joke interviews is a list of ever increasing and more threatening grunts and then a list from the journalist of the injuries he received.

There is another delightful pin-up too. Of a, rarely, sunny looking bunch of Au-Pairs, basking away in front of the camera like, like ..... oh let's not bring back Steve Strange into the conversation.

## COSMIC

**A**lso music loving Johnny Plee gives his first interview for two years, and as you might expect from him it's honest, straight forward and perhaps, not a little lonely.

Sob, sob, I've really got to pull myself out of this. It really is a good issue isn't it?? and of course it is bound to improve. The photographs are produced better than any other music monthly.

Gosh, I had better end this before the whole magazine sounds like one of Jobbo's pet projects. Love and kisses until the next issue then,

**Bye Bye!**



# STRENGTH THROUGH JOI

Until more than 200 hundred skins were imported into Southall for an OI gig, OI and it's followers were unknown. However, it is just as wrong to stereo-type skins as being racist and violent as it is to call black people muggers. The music has lyrics ranging from the openly Nazi 'Be A Storm-tooper' from Roi, to the Afflicted being hailed as champions for the British Movement.

The second OI album Strength Thru Oi is a poisonous parallel with the Nazi slogan Strength Through Joy. The innovator of the cult Gary Arsehole the features editor for Soinds summed up his feelings on the sleeve notes of the album! "A mass of boots, straights, combat jackets, and hoots and OI OI. The boys, hard and handsome, young blood on the prow". And the give away quote, 'I'm a patriotic 'socialist' I love this country, and it's working-class traditions."

However, the BM are using skin-heads as brainless muscle in much the same way as Hitler was a parasite on the brown shirts, and once he used them to force himself to power, he smashed them in the Night of The Long Knives.

What is needed in music is not raw aggression, brutish machismo, but a basic humanity, a compassion, even a tenderness. People like Black Uhuru, Dexys, Echo THEY HAVE IT.

"Blind acceptance is the sign, of stupid fools who stand in line". — by John Lydon — 1977

# ROCK ON THE ROCKS

Rock is a gesture expounded, an emotion expressed.

It continues like a prize-fighter trying to regain a lost fortune, bellicose and drunken, the same angry fists pounding in self conscious ritual rather than spontaneous feeling.

Rock is not angry, but verbose, not powerful, but obtuse, not exciting or dangerous, just obscene. Self-destructing.

Take away the mood of the 60s — rock as a pulse to youth's confidence, as an expression of an anti-establishment alternative life-style — and you have the spikey shell which projected it. You have the ball and chain tenderness of Saxon, Gillan, and the Tygers of Pan Tang — their heartless abrasion.

There is the pop deceit of Rainbow's alimumium metal, the vulgarity of them cracking Russ Ballard nuts like "Since You've Been Gone" with their instrumental hack-saw.

The message is insincere, a premise for Ritchie Blackmore to languish in the rockist dead-end, the figure-head of the metal morass, wallowing with his fellow guitar molesters in the fanaticism of a mindless following. Self-celebration.

Violence for a world suspended in violence, sexist insults at at time of sexual reapraisal, that is why they are becoming more isolated, a pagan tribe.

New pop ethics will devour the rock bacteria like disinfectant, and reduce it to the foul smelling dust of a sun-bathing vampire.

The new pop stars of the eighties have arrived, Adam Ant, and Julian Cope with the all embracing lovliness of the Teardrops' pop.

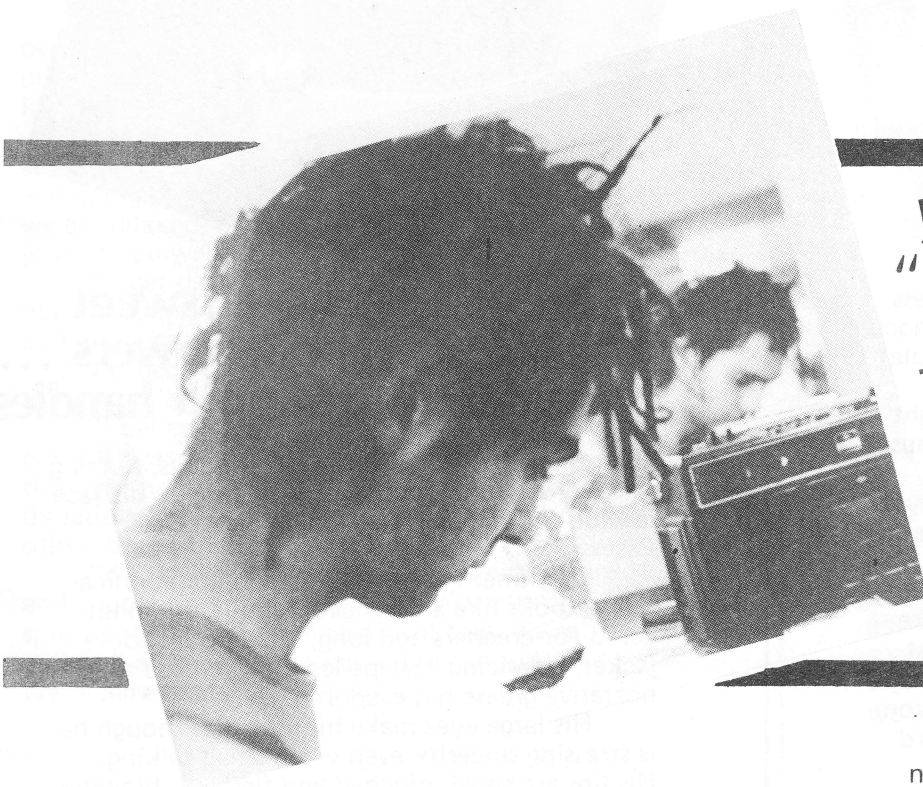
A new vocabulary of pop will replace rock's empty rhetoric, with U2 love (divorced from Hippie puritanicalism), Modern Eon's humility, and Wah! with damn right flaming humanity. Concern for young people, from the Beat, Specials, and the Jam, will replace cynical abuse.

Pil adventurism is demolishing rock textures to find a breezy percussive sack-cloth. Fire-Engines are fun. Exciting, fresh sounds, challenging, questioning — but caring, respecting, and sharing.

Kill Nostalgia. Admire the view now we have reached the top of the Pistols' thorny stockade, there is an exhilarating slide down to THE OTHER SIDE — a new age!



# ANTI-CHRIST CRUSADE



JAZ  
"DARWIN WAS  
INCONCLUSIVE" JOKE  
Tells NEIL ROWLAND we  
descend from dirt.....  
now HOPE ROWE (PICS.)  
daren't dig in his  
garden...!!

**Killing** Joke wouldn't fit the mood of a funeral — their expressions would send the mourners parachuting after the coffin into the grave — their absence from after service sherries would create a mood of euphoria akin to the VE Day Celebrations.

They are not uncomfortable, they are unbearable. Their music is a flame which might itself have licked out the black, sordid landscape their words describe — with spasmed agony.

Displeasure is their triumph. They leave you with the dignity of a cat forced up a blind alley by a car's head-lights.

At the same time .....  
.....there is a seduction, a "living and lusting" as Jaz puts it, but back to the primitive desires which they drag up through processed patterns of behaviour.

Platitudes are destroyed. The seat of normality is displaced. Perspectives are dissipated — there is no guidance, and no protection left, but then there is no restriction or control, either. This is a musical altered states (sic) — deprivation of cosily arranged proceedings and relationships which audiences demand from bands.

A nightmare replaces normal senses. But they are not the nightmare. They have SEEN the nightmare. They are showing us the nightmare, and within it is such an APPALLING vision, it might be the FINAL vision.

Terror ah ah ha ha!

Killing Joke is the paranoia of seeing the nuclear holocaust hanging above like a bag of flour from a clothes peg — about to fall, and BURST, all over us! And .....

.....out of the paranoia, as a result of communicating it — should come inspiration to discover for yourself, then to share that discovery, and to **act upon it!**

I expect them to be difficult — mocking, oblique, physical, and destructive to conversa-



tion with the use of obtuse answers — full of pseudo-mysticism, superior intellectualism, and pleasure at baiting another writer.

TRUE!!! There was a sense of them leaning off an edge towards me, waiting to crash down from a great height as soon as they smelt a faintly cynical question. BUT!! There was charm, and there was eloquence. Yes.

Maybe it was instinct — when surrounded by potentially violent people you humour them, grasp the atmosphere at which they feel most comfortable.

St. Alban's air is sultry outside, full of heat and traditional English humidity. The City Hall venue is even more condensed, and inside Killing Joke's dressing room (phew) the atmosphere is tightly packed, like the metal bundles old cars are reduced to.

## Razor

Managing to seep through is the sweetness of herb and body odour, with splashes of chocolate thick Motown/Reggae music from portable cassette machines.

Geordie sits in his plastic chair — lips tight but slightly mocking, more bemused than amused, artificial lighting running in shafts along his chasmed, long, flat-ridged cheek-bones. His eyes are eye-liner dark rimmed, rounded not from attentiveness but from concentration on one thought — don't ask me what!

Geordie has startled, dead white hair, like the greek's from "Fun-house". His dis-interest borders on morosity — ("Would you like a chat?" I ask. "No he replies) — there isn't a flicker from his body, or a shift of eyes from the cold, hard floor, even for photographs.

But despite this there is a trigger sensitivity waiting to be brushed and tightened, which I feared might spring off and slash me razor-like. He frightened me — the way his body, although mostly an inactivelump, could clench with a barely controlled rage and contempt.

Fear ah ha ha!

## Knee

George Benson trickles out of the speaker — Youth's eyes dart rapidly from side to side with the rhythm, as he attempts to pick out the bass-line. A dread-lock falls down on to his fore-head, one thick branch from the stunted Christmas tree on his head.

"We only do benefits when we are asked,



## Sweet, sweet dreams about flowers... oak panels and gold handle

and no-one has asked us lately," he says, slurring his words dumbly, but his smile tingles, his face is wide and radiant like a crude hewn David Essex.

Drummer Paul — helpful and communicative — looks like a deranged Teddy-boy, in uncared for creepers and long, dust grounded jacket, balancing a shape-less quiff whose supportative grease has evaporated.

His large eyes make him seem as though he is stressing sincerity even when small talking. His lips are small, pinched and fleshy — blowing words out like kisses:

"There is a massive paranoia about 1984. You mention those numbers to anyone and if that's not enough to cause a war or a disaster what is?"

I say: "I understand the symbolism of the 1st LP's cover, but what was it's vision?"

He leaps up onto the bench beside me, stoopes to his knees a little, eyes rolling to their corners to catch a glimpse of Geordie's corpse stillness: "It's not looking forward in hope," he says.

What is the fear as portrayed on the LP sleeve?

"It needn't necessarily be a nuclear holocaust — it could be any form of social disruption, and it looks as though it is going to happen. It was putting a picture forward of the fear everyone has got."

Do you find that imagery attractive?

"It's not attractive, it seems more appealing to us to sing about what we see as reality."

Are you trying to frighten people out of that situation? "Yeh, I hope everybody gets scared shitless," he says, turning around, mouth open, laugh clicking abrasively through the gears, "hah.....hah.....hah....."

Scared shitless ah ha ha!

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## Split up

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**J**az. Long — lean — dark. His skin is tight over his bones like an operational rubber glove on a surgeon's hand his pupils reflect the light like two ovals of coal chipped out at the centre.

"We were paranoid, we used to watch television, we used to see the way the world was going, it was paranoia, now we're different, we are relaxed, because we realise you live as long as you want to live.

We get on with our lives. When the day in our life comes to go, that day comes, You live, and you lust until that day!"

Jaz begins his long, oraculative explanation of the Killing Joke.

"I believe that if you want you can have control over your own destiny. We have gone through that sore period. We actually have direction. We are all quite happy with each other, the band are in excellent form.

"We have gone through some funny scenes and people have thought, ah, they're gonna split up, and, hah! We haven't split up, we're still well alive and enjoying life to the full. We're here to stay."

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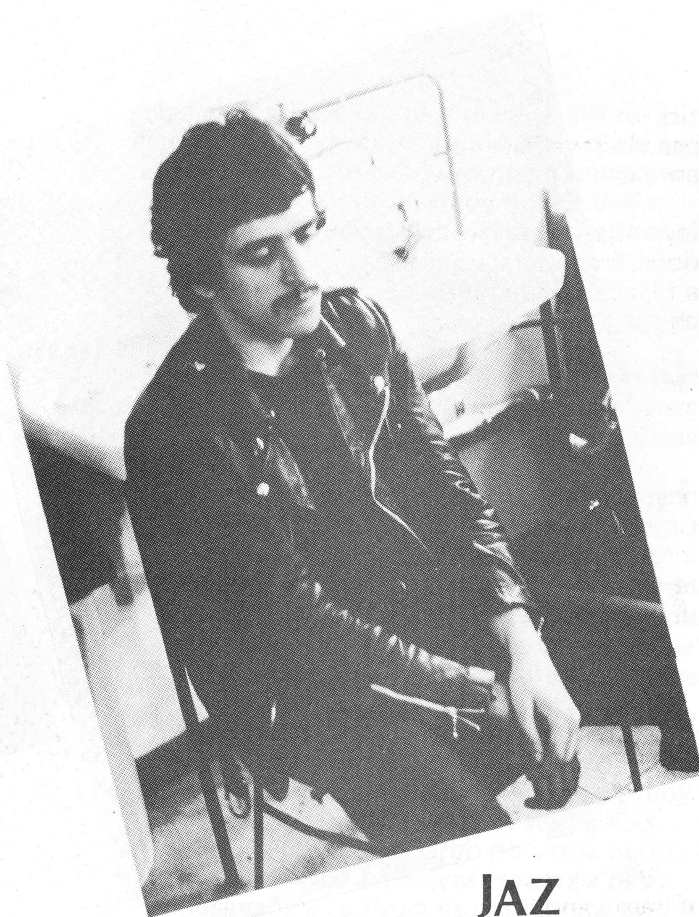
## Knife

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**H**is intellect is ruthless, his conviction is aggressive.

But Jaz and Killing Joke have expressed extreme cynicism for the marching mentality of the anti-nuclear groups and so on. Jaz: "I have no regard for them, what-so-ever, it is pathetic. I sympathise with them, I don't agree bomb dropping, but I don't think they will achieve anything. Their way of reacting to the situation is pathetic, it is an insult." He goes on: "You are invoking the situation to happen. You should just get on with your life."

To middle-class liberals peace pic-nics and marches are all very cosy — the thinking man's bingo. But, people must have control over their destinies, are you talking about individualism, of looking after yourself?



## JAZ ASKEY laughing until he is daft ....?!

He shuffles slightly, body as taught as his works, which he lays out in to the air, as if cut with a knife, slithered, snaking: "You are of the same species as the cunt in America and the cunt in Russia; we are all the same species; you are born as a human being and this world is ours; not this country; this whole world is ours.

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## Sex

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**"T**here are no limitations. I don't believe in restriction. I believe restriction is a word of sin.

"It is like curiosity, if you are curious about a drug or maybe having sex with someone, the worst thing to do is to stop yourself from doing it. That leads to perversion. The best thing to do is go through the experience try it, analyse the situation and then judge for yourself.

"I believe that if you become a drug addict," he says looking up to the ceiling, and with his arms out, forming his body into the shape of an arm-chair, "you are a slave to the drug, you are a slave". He looks down into his lap again. "If you have a strong will you will go through the experience and learn.



"It's the same as if you meet a young lady. If you are curious about her body and vice versa the worst thing you can do is to stop it, right? You have to enjoy yourself, that is what life is all about," he says finally about the subject.

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## Butcher

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**H**ow did your attitudes change from the first LP to the second?

"It was our environment, everything changed around us. Since the last album our music has taken us half way round the world. We've met loads of different people, some amazing people from all parts of the world.

"The first album reflects people who were constantly worrying about the world situation. And how far is worrying going to get you? he asks, stretching his neck forward like a cock about to crow. "Did we want to inflict our worry on other people?"

I don't know, I say, what do you think?

"We wanted to use music as a channel—to get rid of that paranoia, to get rid of that feeling," he says reflectively, "Wardance really relaxes me as a song. When we play it, it gets a lot of things off people's chests.

"The second album is different. There is more of an explanation why! "His arms spread, eyes widen and lips curl. "There is a closer observation of the situation we are in. Tracks like Butcher, that is my interpretation of why situations are like they are."

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## Swastika

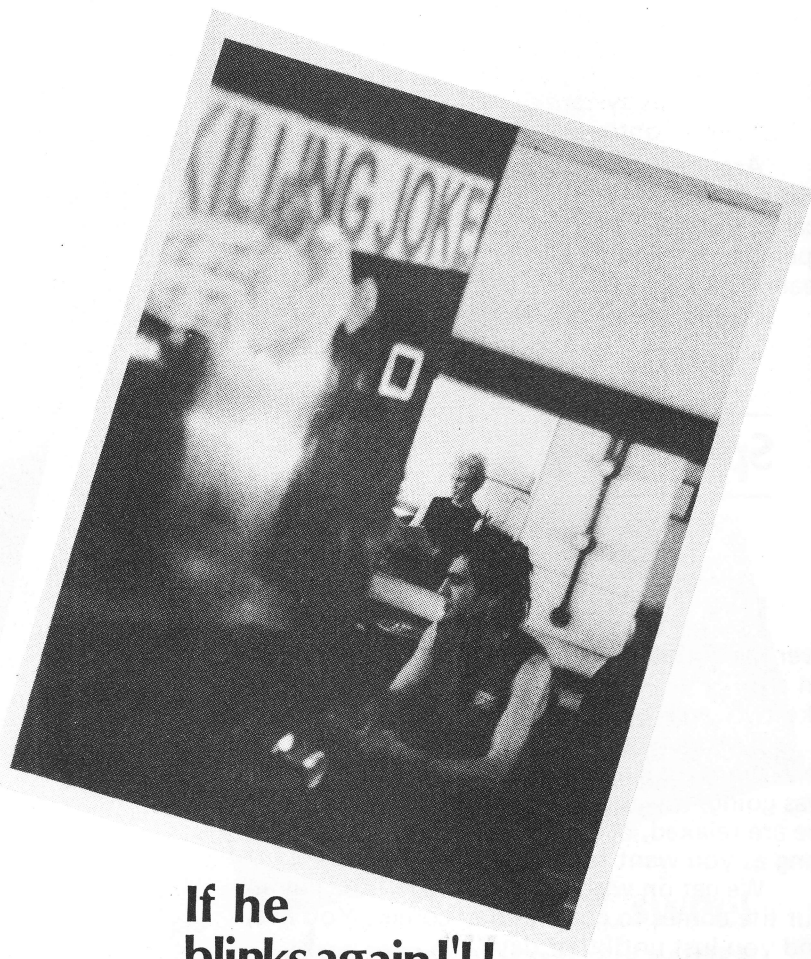
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**T**he most fearful element to Killing Joke, for me, is the powerful anti-Christian imagery—containing all the qualities of the best black magic stories. These words make your heart shudder like a drill digging up a concrete path.

Can we ever forget the menacing expression of Christ on their LP's cover brandishing the crucifix like a whip.

"The reasons behind the symbol of the church, the four points of the cross, the four points on the swastika, the reason behind them ....." Jaz re-emphasises, with a short silence, "is not explained".

"They just say this is the symbol of Christ, they don't say this represents the four elements, fire, water, or even north, south, east and west. And there is a science behind it all. They don't explain that to you, they just want to keep a lot of people ignorant."



## If he blinks again I'll cancel the ambulance

Jaz has become so tense, so wrapped up in his sentences that they stutter out in stunted gasps.

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## Die

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**I** prompt him a little by asking: Do you believe that these signs are paganized symbols? Obviously he does:

"Well put it like this, they came a long time before Christianity. I do believe that Christianity does have a lot to do with the problems we have today, because all our morals, all the people in power today, they make all their decisions, and their morals are guided by this so called, religion.

"A great responsibility is put on their shoulders. And this religion basically turns into money. That is why these people say we shall have twenty four power stations in five to ten years. They are not thinking of their children's, or children's children's children's children — because they only think about their own physical life-span.

"To me that shows spiritual depravity."

Jaz is thinking in front of what he is saying and often, now, he is getting his arguments muddled as if they are part of a jig-saw someone has thrown out of the window.

If this system of order has to be broken down, I continue, what would you replace it with?

It's not what 'you' replace it with right, You are allowed to live this life, something is allowed you.

"We're an advanced form of nature. It (nature) has got to grow, nothing happens just like that, right. If ever there is going to be any change it's going to happen gradually. Many of us will die, but some will get through"

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## Filth

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So will it take a nuclear war to achieve that?

"Maybe it will, maybe it wont, I'm not the one to say. I think there will be a change maybe nuclear, but because of the filth we pump into the earth.

"I believe the earth itself will react. Our bodies came from the earth, and I believe the first and fore-most thing is to take care of the environment. We must understand the cycle of nature." He rocks backwards and forwards, body even tighter, as if desperate for the toilet. "It comes from a long time back, things have got to this situation.

"Before Christianity they used to have a father figure and a mother, they used to have the sky as the father figure, and the earth as the mother — there are reasons behind this y'know."

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## Son

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Geordie blinks.

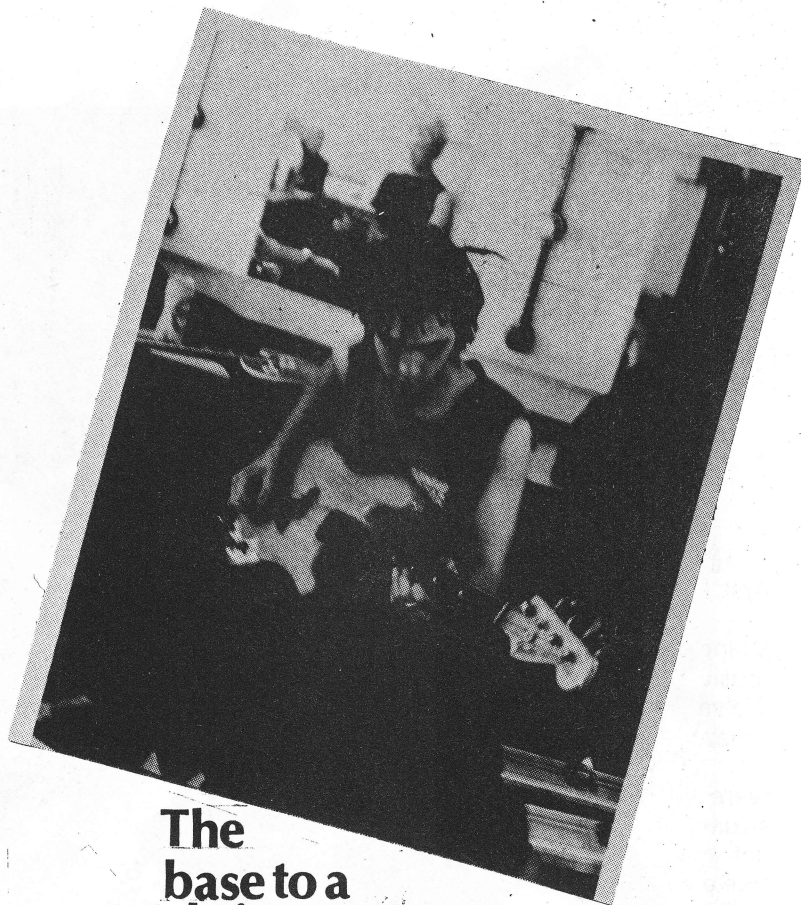
Jaz continues: "And the church used father, son and the holy ghost. Can you see the symbolism behind this?"

I confessed I didn't

"The mother figure had gone away, and that is why we have been pumping filth into the earth and are digging fall-out shelters. The earth is suffering and it will punish us.

"I believe technology has gone as far as it can possible go," he suddenly says. "I am quite looking forward to the next few years. Some people see destruction as a bad thing, but often it washes out the old and replaces with the new.

"There is a science of life, there is a science of a religion. I believe where science and religion parted company was around about the time when christianity prevailed.



## The base to a christmas tree....

"I had a lot to do with the church, a lot in my past y'know. I just noticed that all the festivals are just pagan festivals that have been christianized, like the blessing of the plough, and the yule log."

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## Confront

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Some friends, plus manager Maggie, enter their changing room. "You look nice tonight," Paul tells a girl.

Jaz turns back round and goes off on a different, final track:

"Those people out there who we are playing for are the only thing keeping me from running away from everything. I believe there are people to bother with, who can open their minds, and they may have a lot to do with the future.....who knows;

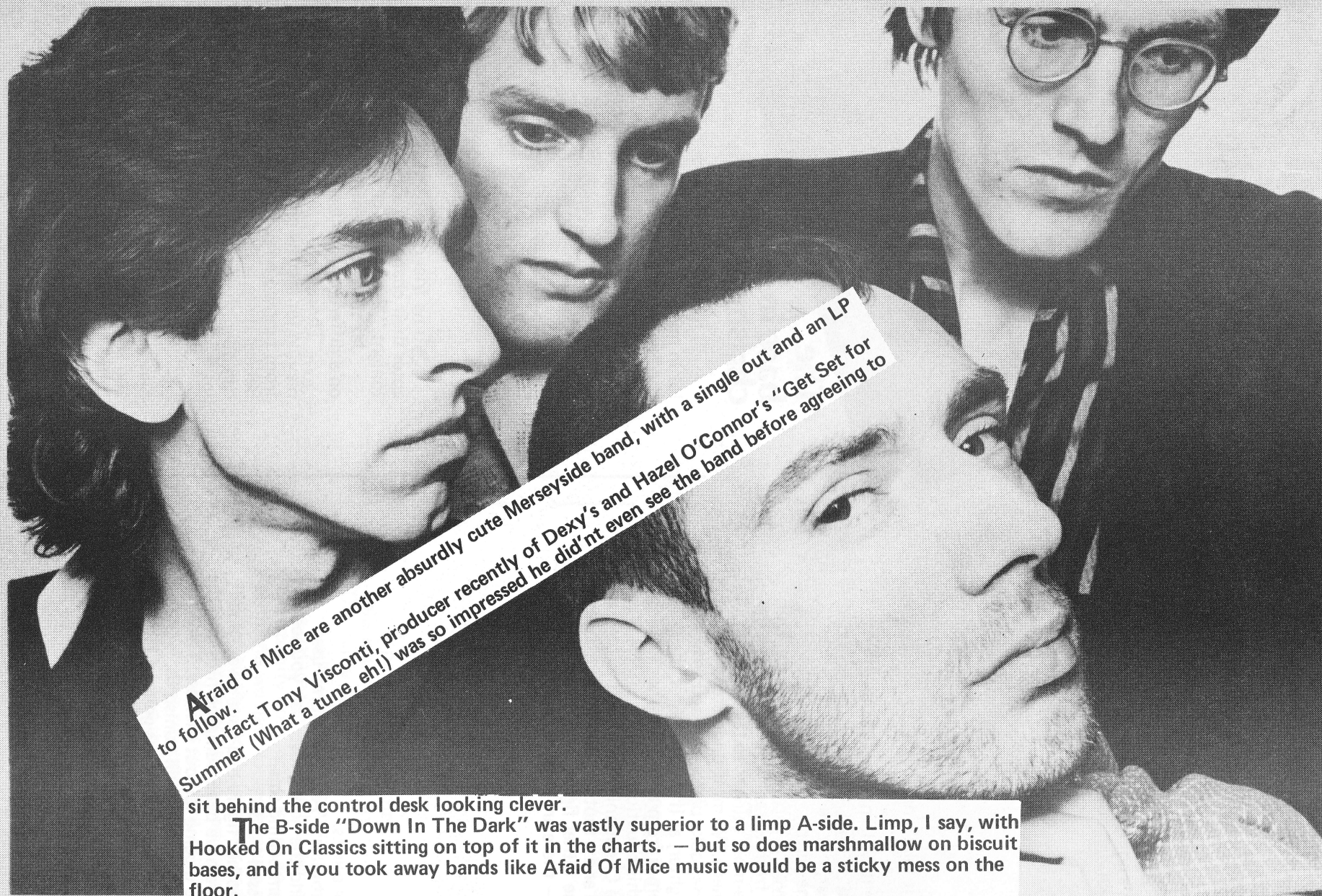
"The next few years are going to be very strange for all of us, right. That's why we play pretty raw music, we like to inspire lust and strength in people, so they can go through those situations feeling a certain amount of fire, and feeling positive when confronted with a strange situation, like riots in the streets.

"You have to have music which doesn't channel away from it but which faces it, and comes to terms with it....."

To confront it? I interrupt.

"Totally, totally!! That is the answer."





Afraid of Mice are another absurdly cute Merseyside band, with a single out and an LP to follow. Infact Tony Visconti, producer recently of Dexy's and Hazel O'Connor's "Get Set for Summer (What a tune, eh!) was so impressed he didn't even see the band before agreeing to

sit behind the control desk looking clever.

The B-side "Down In The Dark" was vastly superior to a limp A-side. Limp, I say, with Hooked On Classics sitting on top of it in the charts. — but so does marshmallow on biscuit bases, and if you took away bands like Afraid Of Mice music would be a sticky mess on the floor.

# MICE ON MALLOW?!

# EQUALITY JUSTICE PEACE

"Inglan is a bitch, dere's no escaping it  
Inglan is a bitch, you haffi know how fi  
survive in it" LKJ 1981

Poets today, in this world of escalating violence, social persure and greed, have to make one of three choices. They can be escapist and lapse into mysticism and hallucinatory drugs. They can compromise their views and try commercialism. Or they can do as Linton Kwesi Johnson has done, that is face up to the injustices and write dear, invincible poetry, about black working class experience — and set it to accessible and very beautiful reggae music. The result is that the poet draws upon the dialects of the black community and gives it a sense of gut-solidarity.

Linton was born in August 1952 in Chapelton, Jamaica. He left to join his mother who had emigrated to England in 1961. Between 1963 and 1970 Linton attended the Tulse Hill Comprehensive School in Brixton, graduating with six O levels. He then went on to attain 2 A levels. In 1973 he entered Goldsmiths College where he got a B.A. Degree in Sociology. After a spell of unemployment he worked as an assembly worker at Twinlocks in Croydon.

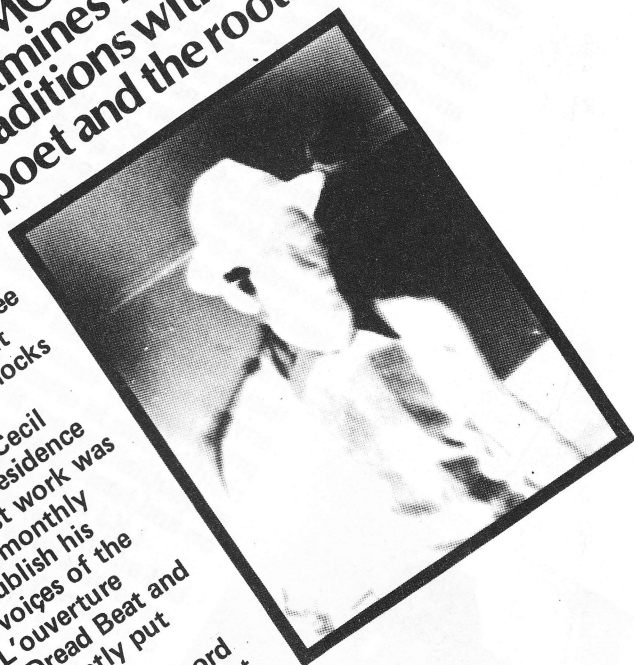
In 1977 Linton was awarded the Cecil Day Lewis Fellowship as a writer in residence in the Borough of Lambeth. His first work was published by Race Today in their monthly journal and soon they were to publish his books of poems, namely "The voices of the Living and the Dead". Boyle L'ouverture published his second volume "Dread Beat and Blood" and Race Today have recently put out "Inglan is a bitch".

Although not disillusioned with record companies "They only exploit artist, they act like they're doing you a favour just by releasing your work", he recorded "Dread Beat and Blood" on Virgin and "Forces of Victory" on Island. Perhaps the biggest break through was when a documentary of the poet-at-work was financed by the Arts Council of Great Britain, and screened by the beeb of all people, at peak viewing time!

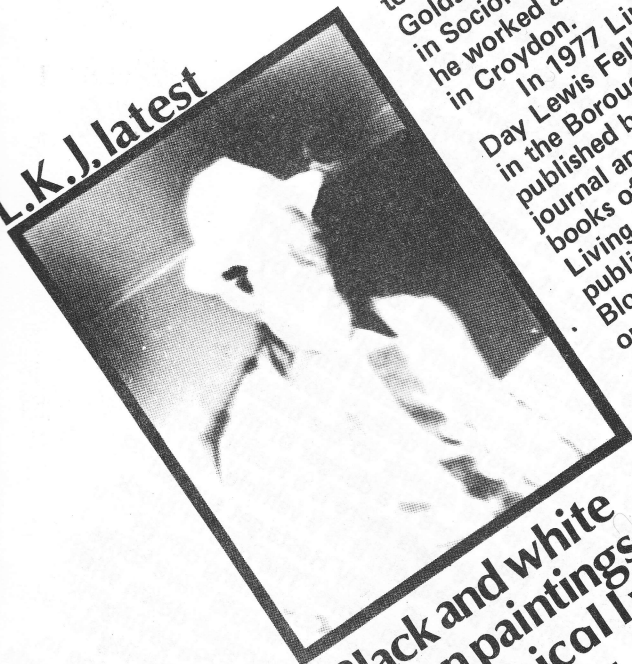
Ever since leaving Comprehensive School, Linton has been active in the black struggle, a mass organisation of working blacks mobilised to pursue the liberation of blacks from what they called "Colonial oppression" with The Black Parents Movement and The Race Today Organisation.

You can't miss LKJ, he still wears his characteristic trilby hat and black framed, artless lick and lash of his music, with concern, with intensity, and with a deep humanity.

## DESMOND HUNT examines lost British traditions with the poet and the roots



## L.K.J. latest



Black and white  
action paintings  
by chronical ly  
colour blind  
HOPE ROWE



He looks at me angrily "No I'm not doing anymore interviews, I've nothing new to say". Then he becomes the man of reason. I mention The New Cross Fire, Brixton and Race Today, and he ushers me in having vetted and accepted me.

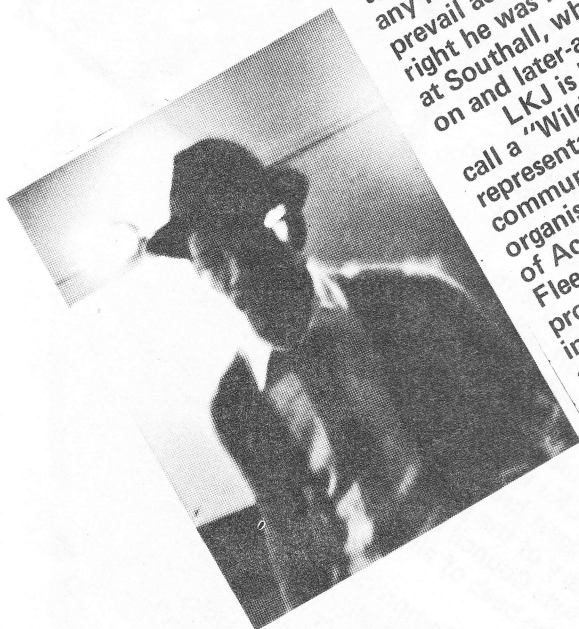
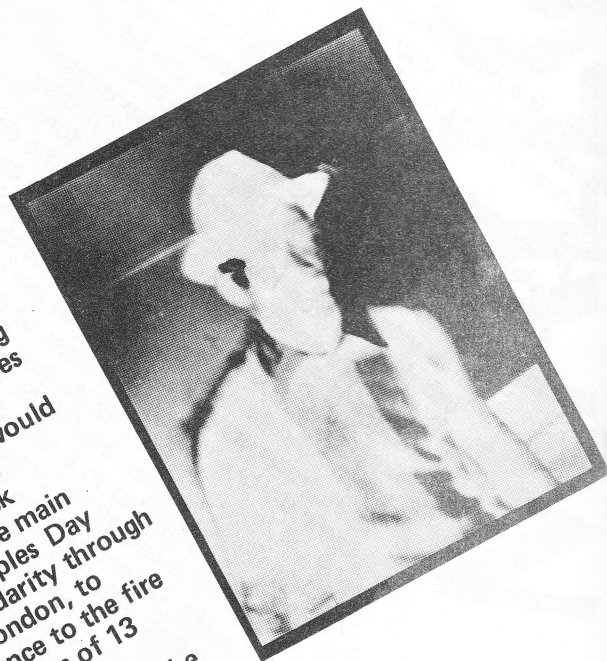
"Race Today is an independent black organisation which puts out a monthly journal. It is important because it mobilises support for campaigns and tries to heighten the consciousness of black and white people involved in the same causes. We want to work with those whites who are interested in isolating the fascists among them and dealing with those backward racists amongst us as well. We have the small minority of blacks who believe in the "back-to-Africa" idea, or nonsense like hating the white man. These elements represent the ass-hole end of black politics. They preach the same kind of race hatred that the British Movement and the National Front preach. You saw what happened at Brixton when the police started their swamp intimidation. Black and White people rose to the occasion and made their protest that they were not going to take any more of this. As long as these conditions prevail acts of insurrection will happen." How right he was in retrospect with further rioting at Southall, where Blair Peach's memory lives on and later all over the country.

LKJ is hardly what the Daily Mail would call a "wild rampaging black", he is the representative voice of a troubled black community. In fact he was one of the main organisers of the recent "Black Peoples Day of Action", a march of Black Solidarity through Fleet Street, and the centre of London, to protest at the media's wall of silence to the fire and injured 26 others.

"In Dublin when they had the fire in the discotheque, they had a day of mourning and the Prime Minister made a speech, but not a single member of our parliament mentioned the massacre. That is why we demonstrated to show the country at large, the police, the government, and the fascists, that we're no longer prepared to have so many people killed and if it comes to it we're prepared to fight and say nothing about it, but we're here to stay totally misled and confused and lots of important evidence was mysteriously covered up by the police which was later revealed".

Linton has always associated himself with reggae music, although he doesn't believe that Rastafarianism is the answer to the black problem. He feels there is a danger of mystifying the struggle and he feels there is a Rasta trap. "Music is a weapon, it is a vehicle for transmitting ideas, so many Rasta get sucked into Bob Marley imitations. They should have some of their own experience. They should have some integrity instead of getting bogged down with this ever changing religion. They're saying "Jah" wil help us, and talk about leaving for Zion, but there's so much more happening in this country. People are being killed by fascists and we've had a constant struggle with the police since We've been here, we don't get

# DEATH



# AND

# RIOTS

proper housing, health services or education. The rastas, to a large extent, have completely ignored these things. I think its a bit of a cop-out, its reactionary and its not taking us anywhere."

He then seethes with a glowing rage! "You think of the colonial conditions, a white guy working for Tate and Lyle in some cushy office job gets six or even seven times the amount of money as the black guy working the sugar plantation. He's actually helping produce the sugar and picking it. You can't say that black exploitation doesn't still go on."

So far after setting up his own LKJ label, he has released only one 12in single "Solitude". "It's a new direction for me, its very traditional, there are jazz nuances, blues roots, reggae music has come through many stages such as Ska, rock-steady and variations of reggae dub, skanking, toasting and so on".

What was the purpose of his excellent Dub album? To showcase some of Britain's Best reggae players? "Exactly, I felt the music had been neglected because of my excellence to get the effect I made a dub album of all the tracks that I thought were strong enough to stand up on their own. Also they featured some of my favourite musicians like Floyd Lawson, Vivian Weathers, Rico, John Kpiaye the hardest guitarist ever, and Jah Bunny to name a few".

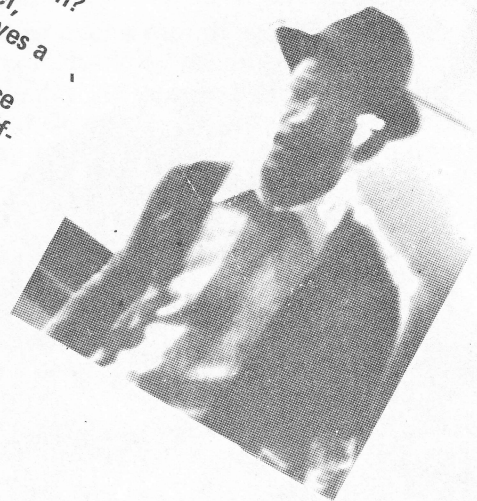
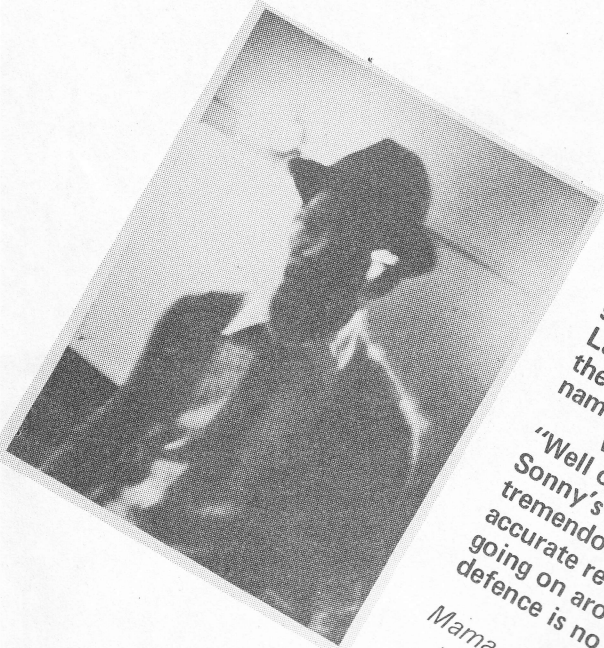
Which number means the most to him? "Well on an emotional and artistic level, Sonny's Lettah (anti-sus poem) still leaves a tremendous impact on me. I feel it is an accurate reflection of the mindless violence going on around us. It is also a plea that self-defence is no offence".

Mama more policeman come down and beat me to the ground  
dem charge jim fi suss, dem charge me with murder  
Mama don't fret, doan get depress an down-  
hearted  
Be of good courage till I hear from You  
I remain your son,  
Sonny

What association does Race today have with other political groups? "Well we will work alongside them. We got involved in the right to work campaign and some in the Peoples' March. However as I said in the "Independent Intervention", they have a cheek saying we are weak and can't speak up for ourselves. I am all for Black, yet we are well organised, and co-operating, and whites joining forces, and really ride the storm".

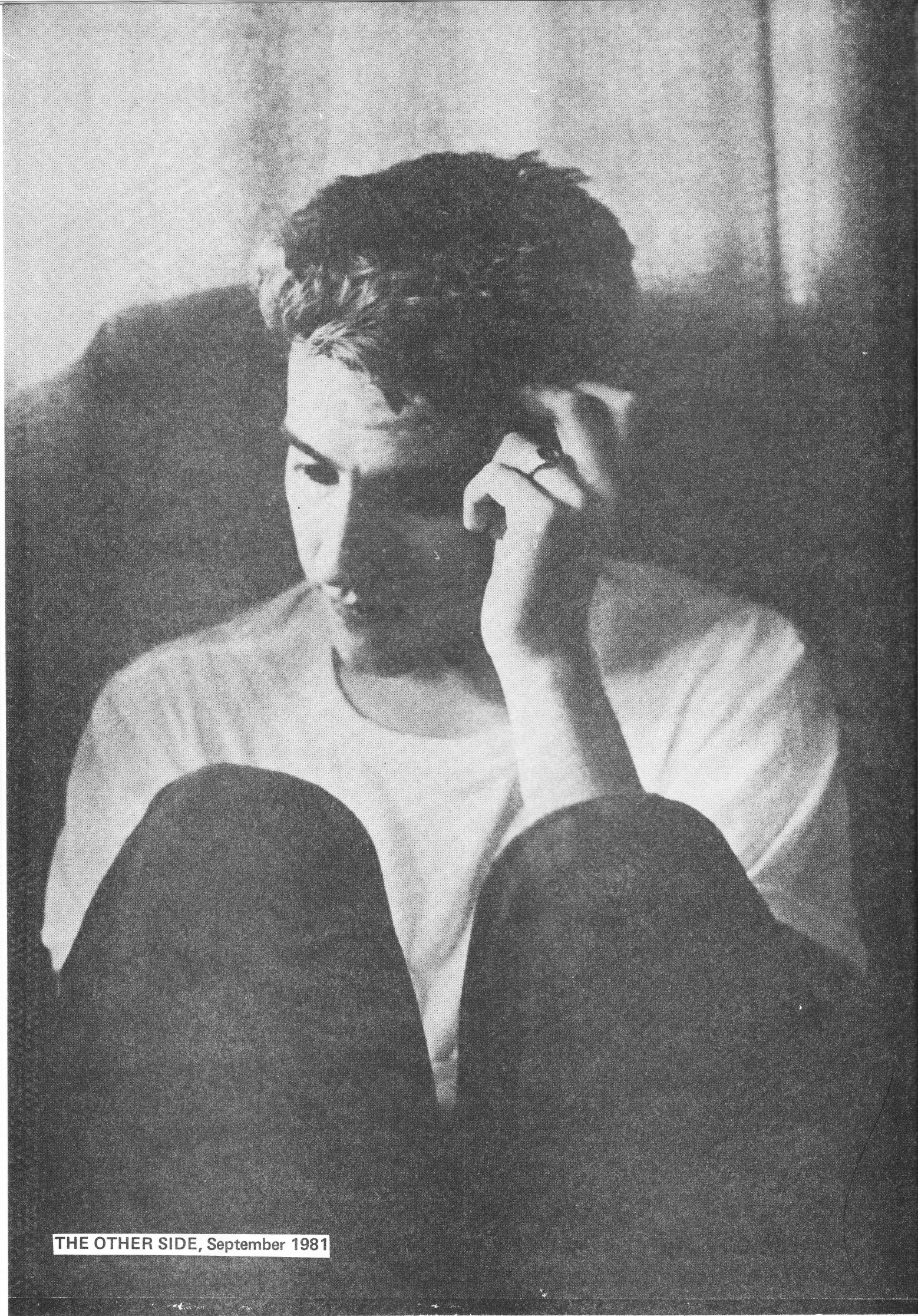
The message speaks for itself, direct and uncluttered by pretension. As I leave the room I turn round and shake his hand firmly. I really wanted to hug him and say what he's doing is fabulous. But that's not something a real journalist s do surely?.....

ends.



# BLOOD





THE OTHER SIDE, September 1981



# The Greatest Show on Earth

Plucking up enough courage to walk through the Ghost Town is PAUL WELLINGS, pushing him with her tri-pod is LESLEY SMITH.

**Hey** a message to you Rudie!

"Why must the youth fight against themselves,

"Government leaving the youth on the shelf" Jerry Dammers.

So you thought The Specials had irretrievably sunk into oblivion! But suddenly, like an insect escaping from a venus fly trap, you get Ghost Town, a real kick in the teeth for Tony's fun fourty.

The single was full of intense emotion, musically magnificent, and a frightening prophecy of the cataclysm on the streets — from our very own dusbin kids.

Not only that, but it showed the group still care passionately about what they are doing, and they were not going to fall prey of any "rock" writers to judge their craft.

The purity and honesty of that single was a continuation of all that had gone before but at the heart of it was an emotional force, it had life and soul; YES even soul power, cause "Reggae got soul".

What is soul? You might ask — well soul is not just a form of black music, it is something that very few bands have today, and you must accept no substitute for it. Too often soul is replaced with pedestrian hard-rock cliches, instead of strength, and pure passion.

Groups like The Specials can project their emotions, they can bring you up and take you down, make you realise that tears and laughter are equally important. Above all though they

make music fun, when it can get too grey and sombre for its own good.

Maybe the ska revival has had the last nail driven home into its coffin, particularly after that abomination of a movie "Dance Craze", but The Specials are neither dead or gone

Just over a month ago, The Specials made their comeback by heading a Festival Against Racism at a stadium in their home 'ghost' town of Coventry. Soon after this they decided to play for harmony at the Northern Carnival against Racism at Leeds.

A further benefit at London's Rainbow Theatre in aid of the campaign for jobs, sealed the idea that this positive vibration was back, and still had a lot to say.

To go to the carnival was like sifting through a compost heap and finding radiant jewels. The Au-Pairs for instance shone with cerebral brilliance; a sound full of surprises and resonant intervals, and Lesley Woods purring, and feverish voice penetrating your body like an open heart surgeon. Misty in Roots also cast a spectrum of light through the audience with their stylish, rousing reggae. However it was not until just after six o'clock that the event was given it's most stirring kiss of life with the Coventry 7 piece, our old friends, The Specials.

There's Neville Staples jumping around like a male Olga Korbut, Terry Hall in all his sartorial elegance, the black and white guitar-men Lynval Golding, and Rodie Radiation, the





steady flowing bass lines of Sir Horace blending blissfully with John Bradbury's percussion, and Rico, Dick and Paul busting a gut in the flourishing, horn section. Tortured screams curdling your blood in "Old Boiler". Former Body-snatcher Rhoda gave a horrific portrayal of the ordeal of rape, and a reminder that sexual politics DO MATTER, which was quite definitely the most terrifying thing I've heard.

Some might have called it "The Greatest Show on Earth", a lot of people at Leeds would have agreed.

The dressing room, I have been told, is a small middle-school on the outskirts of Leeds. It is a veritable aladin's cave of food, drink and people.

I notice Rico in the corner, a smile of satisfaction spreading across his face. His wistful eyes gaze into space and two streams of smoke shoot out his nose. "This-here-cool-rasta" says light up your spliff Mr Collie man,

I ask him if he likes the new Specials sound?

"I didn't know it had changed, but yes we are a good team, it is a very full sound," he says. "By playing with The Specials I have reached a new audience, there is no generation gap. We are a progressive organisation rooted deeply into our music. Crucial."

The band are indeed 'crucial' because out of the holocaust caused by the Pistols, and the resulting explosion of old rock attitudes and guitar heroes, they with others, have shown a new radical style of music which has challenged the most self-inflated industry that has grown up in the Twentieth Century.

How would you describe the music that the group play?

"Well Jerry calls it ska-pop-Funk-afro-punk-jazz, call it anything, but don't call it rock."

Have you any personal reasons for playing this anti racist show today?

"I play today because a lot of my friends have experienced racism and if they hurt my friend they hurt me. As a rasta I believe the peaceful way is the only way regardless of colour and creed."

I leave Rico as benign and gentle as I found him, and move towards singer Terry Hall.

Terry recognises me from a brief encounter in a motorway cafe, and gives me a tentative, Mona Lisa smile. To meet him is a chilling experience, akin to seeing the Cybermen on TV as a kid, and scurrying behind a chair. His new image gives him a glowering post-punk persona, pin-stripe zoot-suit, flat top hair style and tartan trousers. He has individual flair, but those big, sunken, burning eyes — outlined in black — make him look like Bela Lugosi in the very first Dracula movies.

As he talks his deathly pale face, and morose expression, make you feel a little uneasy. I ask him if anything's wrong.

"No. I'm a little pissed off with the violence," he says angrily.

As Terry talks his soothing West Midlands voice, and human frailty, draw you closer to him in reserved stony. Today he had been





visually exciting, looking like Bogart in his new suit. Christ, he looked **THE BUSINESS**, singing Jerry Dammer's witty, but also acutely acidic words, full of barbed resentment.

I ask Terry to explain the anti-fascist shows. He says: "We were contacted by RAR and the ANL to do this because Leeds is a big trouble spot for the National Front and the British Movement, there was a march in the morning and Leeds has had blood on the streets. We thought we must do this. Any group who preach fanatical hatred of someone because of the colour of their skin needs to be shown they're not funny".

He goes on: "The murder of the Asian guy in Coventry in broad daylight also made us feel ill, especially as it is going on in our home. The disturbances at the festivals I just can't understand, all these weapons of hate, it's sick. As The Specials we must continue to stress we need unity. If you are going to bother to live, then do it peacefully for christ's sake. There is no need to do it anyway else," says Terry with blood vessels about to burst.

He has every right to be mad, because The Specials have strived for tolerance, love, caring for people and above all harmony — by presenting their image as a black and white group, for black and white people. Two-Tone sleeves, former black and white suits, powerful symbolism which reaches through far deeper into the human psyche than any lacklustre, glib parliamentary speech. That is the joy of music, it has a direct appeal and can say more in three minutes than an hour of frothy rhetoric by a gout-ridden political warhouse.

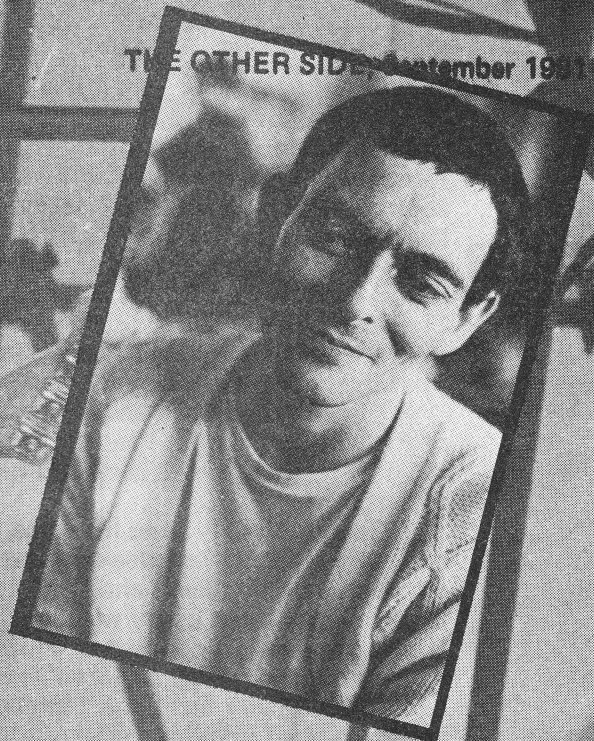
Amid vicious rumours that the group are going to split, I ask cautiously what is the future for The Specials. Terry screws his eyes up as if he is blinded by the question.

"We're all fairly happy, but you have to take each day as it comes. Some people regard us as last years heroes and others have said you're back with a great reggae sound. The new single is definately not what I call reggae, it's a mix of what went on the second LP, sort of theme music and new ideas. We're constantly looking for new sounds and styles. I love the fake jazz of the lounge lizards and the new Talking Heads sound. There's no point in playing it safe, I would try anything for the sake of it rather than cop out and be a rock star".

I then ask Terry about the first tour of the USA, thinking particularly about his infamous cutting remark to the audience, "This is it my little petals, your last chance to dance before **WORLD WAR THREE**" (and don't forget you don't have a say in the war games that they play).

"The USA has its problems. It is similar to Britain but on a much bigger scale. We both speak the same tongue, have the same racial problems, have the same shits as leaders and the same injustices. Above all we both live in fear of nuclear extermination. Need I go on."

What is your reaction to the way the kids all join you on stage. It was a really happy





atmosphere but isn't there a danger of damage and destruction? "I don't mind them having a dance with me, because that's what we are about. We don't intellectualise about things happening around us. We try to be direct. I don't know anything about Marxism or theoretical stuff, I just say 'lets dance' you know. They can pull my hair, or sit on my head when they are dancing as long as they don't fight. That is what makes me mad."

"I can't really talk about the unfairness of the world, but what I can comment on is the ugly face of racism, because I have to live with it."

Terry suddenly loses his voice, choking deep down; "Only last week my best mate got beaten up by blacks and I've had a lot of black mates beaten up by whites as well. It is society and its conditions which breeds racism. I know Lynval says you've got to overthrow society but I don't know what the answer is. All I know is that anything is better

than Thatcher's Britain 1981. He buries his head in his hands and concludes "If the Specials can point out that violence is no solution to anything we will have achieved something."

Hey! Another message to you Rudie, "wish I had lip-stick on my shirt instead of piss stains on my shoes."

Forget the pernicious cynicism and the merciless obituaries about the group. The Specials are still with us and they ain't gonna work on Maggie's farm no-more. Look out for more benefit gigs. Look out for rejuvenated youth culture. LOOK OUT.

They will continue to revolt in style against the things that affect you and me; assumed conformities, twisted facts, transparent hypocrisy and the comfortable conceits of modern society.

Two years ago The Specials made music fun again. That spirit lives on. So free yourself. let your body dance and your heart listen.





THE OTHER  
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LOT OF THEIR OWN INITIATIVE IN FINDING AND CARRYING OUT ASSIGNMENTS.....







# RONNIE SCOTT'S TWILIGHT PARADISE



**H**alf hidden among the sleazy peep shows of Soho's twilight jungle, Ronnie Scott's Jazz Club stands supreme as Europe's number one meeting place for jazz lovers. At first, Frith Street appears to be just another typical street in the notorious centre of London. There are the usual exotic restaurants, the betting shop, the cinema showing erotic films and so on. But there the similarity ends, because the street is the home of one of London's most illustrious culture centres — Ronnie Scott's Club, now in its 22nd year.

It seats about 270 people at small round tables scattered liberally like sprouting mushrooms. On the walls hang portraits of all the legendary jazz musicians who have appeared at the club. Perhaps the most popular part of the club is the bar, where you place your order and a host of waiters and waitresses bring you your drinks and any snacks you require. This is the club which attracts the world's leading jazz exponents and about 60,000 patrons a year. A big advantage for students is that from Monday to Thursday, they can get in for half-price to 99 per cent of the attractions, which means that for about £2 they can hear top calibre music.

Despite the recession which Ronnie Scott feels has bitten deep into the entertainments business, increased interest in jazz has helped the club to even greater success than before.

"The reason the club has had 21 reasonably prosperous years is because jazz has developed and continued to appeal to new audiences of all ages," he says.

"We attract lots of young people who are dissatisfied with some of the garbage which is polluting our airwaves. They hear jazz, probably jazz-funk or jazz-rock, and then delve into the history of the music. No longer can jazz be called music for blind, tone-deaf geriatrics. It is music for everyone."

From outside, the club looks modest, its off-white brick facade giving no hint of the dimly-lit, soul-stirring atmosphere within. Through the door at street level is the main room, spanning forty by thirty feet. Its black ceiling hangs oppressively low but gives the room its wonderfully close feeling and its excellent acoustics.

**BY STEPHEN**

**I**t is open six days a week, with two shows a day, most of the year round. On the first floor, if you venture up, is a disco where non-jazz artists play. But it is downstairs where your host and support artist Ronnie Scott brings you the best entertainment with his own brand of wry humour.

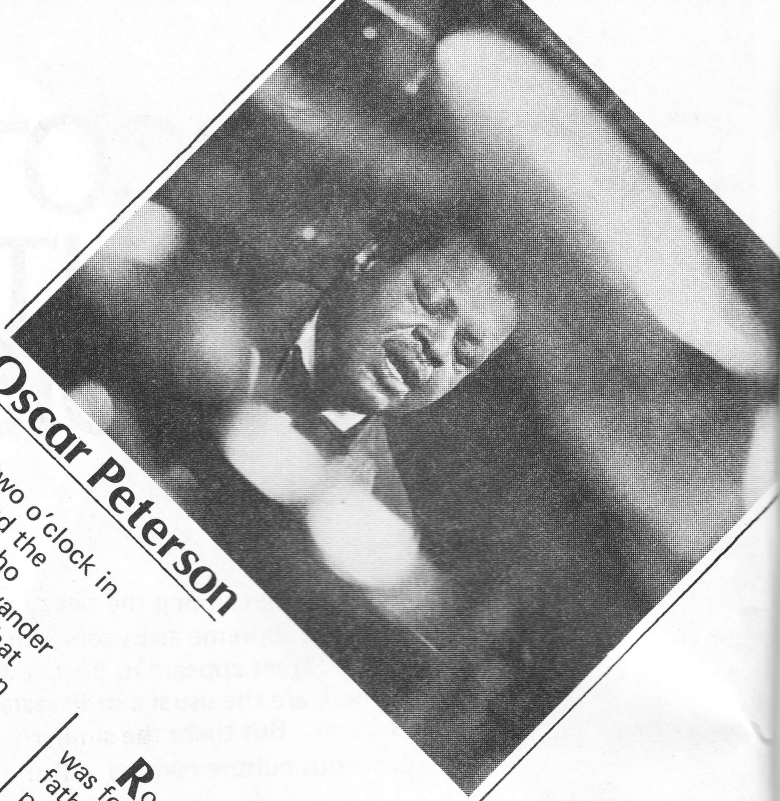
"Good evening ladies and gentlemen. My name is Ronnie Scott. Thank you for your applause. We're particularly impressed by the way some of you are controlling yourselves. It's the first time I've seen dead people smoke. Why don't you all hold hands and try and contact the living. Not keeping you up, am I sir? No don't move, I want to forget you just as you are."

After this little bout of mirth, Ronnie's quartet go straight into their first number of the evening. The club is packed. The drinks are being consumed and everyone lies back as if to soak up the good music.

**SALTZBERG ©**







**Oscar Peterson**

This continues until about two o'clock in the morning and after Ronnie's band the phenomenal Buddy Rich Orchestra who could want more? It is then when you wander out into the darkness of a new morning, that you think of Ronnie Scott's lifetime devotion to jazz.

Scott, a sprightly 54 year old, is a very talented tenor saxophonist with a string of radio and television broadcasts behind him. His father, Jock Scott, played alto-saxophone in London dance bands, and it was the earthy resonance of the instrument that appealed to Ronnie.

"It can be so versatile," he says. "One minute it can suddenly take off and be the fastest, most furious instrument from the heart. It is an extension of the personality if you like".

Ronnie's parents were divorced when he was four but he still continued to hear his father play and his filial devotion to music persisted and grew rapidly.

His first instrument was a five-shilling cornet he bought in Hendon when he lived there. It was unfit to play as was the soprano saxophone that followed it.

But his relentless determination to play something impressed his mother and stepfather. They bought him a playable tenor saxophone when he was 14, and he began to play with small bands almost immediately.

The young Ronnie played with minor bands in London's West End for a number of years, developing his own style, and went on to be a key player with the orchestras of Ted Heath and later with Jack Parnell. His many trips to New York were made in the service of what was known as Gerald's Navy. This was because the orchestra leader, Gerald, booked the first for trans-Atlantic voyages — and the then newly re-fitted Queen Mary, in a band which boasted such British stalwarts as Johnny Dankworth, Tommy Pollard and Ken Moule.

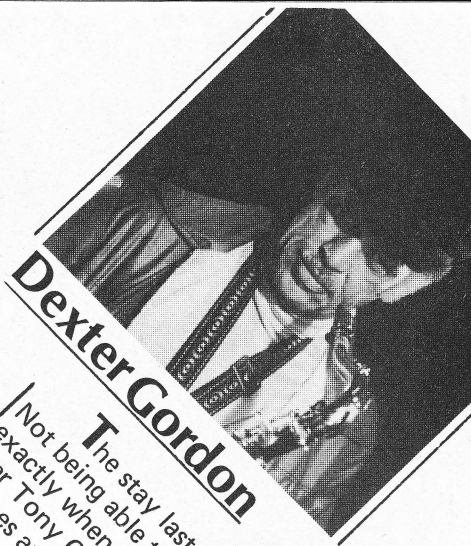
After that, Ronnie became part of a nine-piece co-operative band and went on to organise a big band which made some time less records. Then came a period which changed the face of British jazz. Ronnie formed a band known as The Jazz Couriers, who became a milestone in the History of the music. They featured the late Tubby Hayes, arguably the best tenor saxophonist this country has produced.

They played their last date at the City Hall, Cork in August 1959. The concert was completely sold out and by the end of the concert there was not a single person left in his seat. The idea of setting up a jazz club had come to Ronnie 12 years earlier when, on a holiday trip to the United States, he visited 52nd Street in New York, the heartbeat of all jazz.



**Big band blaze**





## Dexter Gordon

The stay lasted a little longer than planned. Not being able to get a ship back to England exactly when foreseen, he and his friend, drummer Tony Crombie, lived wretchedly on two coffees and one shared doughnut a day until they were able to get back. This starvation lasted for five days until they got passage with a crowded ship, the Ernie Pyle, which took nine days to complete the voyage.

"It made such a deep impression on me, all those jazz clubs playing glorious music way into the night, that I thought I'd like to set up something like that in London," he says. "From what was happening on 52nd Street, I got the idea of presenting jazz in the same kind of intimate atmosphere."

But it was not until 1959 that the dream came true. In that year he and his friend Pete King, a tenor saxophonist from the East End who played in many groups alongside Ronnie, were approached by a friend who had a basement club at 39 Gerrard Street. He asked if they would like to take it over. "We borrowed £1,000 from my step-father and completed with a load of second-hand furniture and a few licks of paint, we opened on October 30, 1959," Ronnie recalls.

"I remember people asked me at the time: 'How can you make a living with a jazz club?' We used to reply: 'Who's making a living with a major problem — a ban between the British and American music unions. This ban meant in effect no American musicians could play in Britain and vice-versa.'

Today Ronnie Scott can more easily take the business of running the club for granted, except that he makes a conscious effort to keep up the show business traditions, which are very much part and parcel of jazz, and has assigned himself to be the funny man. Entertaining, "I am trying to bring something fresh and unique into the jazz scene. That is bringing the best jazz players in the world to the club at reasonable prices and filling the place. As far as jazz is concerned, apart from our club, London is a wasteland for musicians and fans alike."

I am very pleased with the club, we have a cosmopolitan atmosphere, we have people of all nationalities coming to the club. There was a suggestion that we move to set up another club in Manchester, but I am quite happy with the one club."

To be continued next month

However through negotiations, Ronnie managed to start a reciprocal exchange between the American player Zoot Sims and our own Tubby Hayes, both virtuosos sax players. This was a major achievement for Ronnie and a steady stream of the cream of America's jazz came to the relatively new Ronnie Scott's jazz club.

As he is a musician himself, Scott does not take on too much of the business side of the operation, but when in London he is willing to help. That task is supervised mainly by Pete King, who has been his partner since the club opened and his oldest friend.

"This is the only place in London where, at a reasonable price, non-teenagers can come and listen to the music they first liked when they were teenagers," Pete King observes. Ronnie and Pete even care to estimate the worth of the building. Who can blame him? except the building. Pete King's eyes glaze over when he would not even care to estimate its gross income. Above all, the landlords are unpredictable. Above all, the landlords are always pressing for higher rent.



## The club





THE OTHER SIDE, September 1981

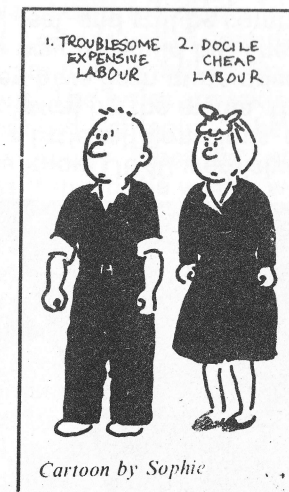


# FEMINIST REALITY

## AND ROLF HARRIS

BY MICHAEL MOREAN

PHOTOS BY LESLEY SMITH



THE OTHER SIDE, September 1981

**T**he Au-Pairs debut LP contains the sort of chariot-wheel, grinding funk The Gang of

Four have since utilized. But within this contortion is stinging feminist pride, and a gracefully described disgust.

They aren't a bunch of politicians in their ideological padded-cell. Their's isn't politics, it isn't a plan or a grand design, or even a plot — it is a basic compassion which the rest of society lacks. All set to tough, abrasive, compelling music.

Sure they have some inconsistent, naïve, and perhaps unrealistic dreams — but only because a cynical, repressive society makes them so.

Lesley Woods. Her voice is dry, the words slide up the back of her throat as if it were

sand-paper, as if sulphuric acid has replaced saliva in her mouth.

This is what makes her singing so interesting — the way her voice slides across the craggy edges, evens out to a silky film, slows down, and then slips back to a husky drawl. It makes you wonder if she crunches broken bottles instead of potato crisps when she goes out for a drink! What-ever the description, her voice ranks with Siouxsie's as one of the most startling, and lusciously mannered.

Lesley has an air of hardness, that is attributed to the Au-Pairs, a gypsy brashness to (and self-sufficiency from) other human beings.

**A**nd sometimes a smile on her features seems as soft as a crack along a rock-face, her eyes untouched, perhaps giving a truer reflection on her mood than the curving lips. Black hair crinkles down to jagged ends, naturally disordered around her porcelain pale face.

But this is a thin first impression, a clay mask which crumbles away at first touch, however hard and solid it may initially look.

She lopes over towards me, (with the other Au-Pairs) for a chat in this dank Oxford Street basement — like a rugby player coming in for a scrum. But from here-on-in preconceptions smudge like oil paintings hoed down with sun-light lemon liquid.



As they gather around me the first question concerns the criticism that their words are slogans. Are they?

Lesley "Our's are not songs which we write just to get a point across. We are singing about situations which affect everybody, whether they are a man or woman, though not in the same way of-course. They can identify with them. What we are doing is articulating that experience for them," she says with earnesty. "If the songs were simply just making a point they would sound a lot differently. We don't write 'Feminist Songs' we write songs that feminists can listen to. We are not crusaders for the womens' cause, we just see women in another way to how society sees them, and to us our way of looking at women is obvious." Yes, "It's Obvious"!

Paul, who joins Lesley for scratchy guitar duels on stage, comes in to verbal unison: "No-one seems to see the Rolling Stones as stating a view, although their songs are often sexually degrading to women. What they are doing is following an accepted attitude that people don't think to challenge. But when you begin to talk from the other side (what was that? — ed.) of that accepted attitude then that is not on. There is a lot of hypocrisy about sex."

Paul was involved with Birmingham's wing of RAR, and in the course of helping to promote events, became interested in punk and the guitar. Lesley, drummer Pete Hammond, and himself were established friends.

Second-man Mick put them in touch with Jane Munro, that studiously still bass player, to form a band, Jane actually answered their first phone-call wet and naked — because she had been in the bath.

Their back-ground in late Seventies anti-fascist movements led them to do a lot of benefits, and recently they played the Carnival Against Racism at Leeds. Does being called a "political" band hold them back?

Paul scratches his Alcatraz hair-cut: "There is a lot of paranoia about so called

aren't men dogs behind your back!

a commercial song and a political song is breaking down, because they are flimsy labels anyway, and there is not such a clear distinction. They are not separate," says Lesley to under-line the point.

The only song which is obviously political is Armagh, treading on volatile political ground. Lesley's voice cuts satirically through their usual big-boned funky rhythm, spitting: "We don't torture, we're a civilised nation....." and so on.

Lesley allows me a quiet explanation of the sentiment: "It's about women in Armagh Prison, Northern Ireland, trying to get political status," she says. "The fact that they are living in appalling conditions, with no clothes.



"You know UB40 were always a little paranoid, a little self-conscious about being termed political by the media, the papers. Lately they have been quite open and free. That's the way it should be. They can say what they feel, and still be commercial, like their album cover of the dole form. That was good, and still commercial.

"It is not necessary to do what the Passions did, to be saying absolutely nothing — just singing songs about German film stars!"

One tune of their's Come Again was banned by the BBC of-course- but shouldn't that be played on Radio One and sexist rubbish like She's So Cold by the Rolling Stones be banned?





political bands, and there is a separation between them and so called commercial bands. But that is highly artificial. You don't have to sacrifice popularity to say something relevant. Just look at UB40 and The Beat."

Lesley laughs wryly: "I saw Barbara of the Passions a while back and she told me that we should write one 'commercial' song, and get into the charts. OK, they did that, and got into the charts, but the Passions will have to write the same sort of song all the time. We won't ever do that."

In fact the follow up to 'German Film Star' was 'Skin-Deep' which wasn't commercial, but was a flop!

"The distinction between what is called

"You know they are beaten up, and some women have had babies in terrible conditions. They give them valium, tranquillizers." Her facial skin crumples around her nose with scorn. "Yes, they give them it to quieten them down. But people don't want to know about it. It is easier to pretend it doesn't happen."

But Armagh isn't as commercially immediate or tactful as say Stand Down Margaret. Are you prepared to dilute your message so as to get airplay?

"Why shouldn't a song like Armagh be played on the radio?" she pleads. "Two Little Boys was played, and that contains a very definite political message. What is a political song?

At no stage do they appease the pullers of strings. The whole group, together with sound mixer Mick, piece together the jangling, crunching components into different combinations, but it is the nature of Lesley's words which adds the edge, flowing with the scornful, harsh, brittle nature of her voice.

Her voice hints at the bare wires beneath, which easily short circuit. It is symbolic of their uncut diamond of sound, rough and angular, but it is a diamond. Listen to the beauty of Lesley's vocals, petulant and quivering. And, yes indeed, full of sexuality, but on equal terms. The lyrics are asking and questioning, are not self-righteous — they have a sense of feminist reality. What they want should be the easiest thing in the world, why isn't it?

Their policy has always been to strive ahead on a tight, straight thrust. They had been together for six weeks when they played their first event on January 5th 1979. "Playing is better practise than rehearsing," insists Paul. "We have always gone head first into things."

Meanwhile Lesley is seeking a perspective. "It is important that a band like us has got where we have without having fallen into the traps of signing one off-single deals with major record companies, and getting lost.

"Producing and getting to know how records are got together and distributed certainly has helped.

"We manage to keep a clear sight of what we are doing. But it would be naive and unrealistic to say we would never sign for a big record company. Even if that does happen though, the Au-Pairs will be just as valid and important as we have been in the past.

"It is important that a song like 'It's Obvious' has been played on Radio One in the day time."

She smiles, and so do her eyes.

What more can they do? How else can they seek to persuade us? "Inconvenience" is the answer, their new Jazz-tinged single.

A Question to end: Are they going to change Jazz in the way that they crunched funk?.....



# distress signals from peel acres

**THE BBC WOMANS THE TRANSMITTER, AND PAUL WELLINGS WATCHS HIS MONITORS FROM AN EARLY WARNING STATION SOMEWHERE ON THE ISLE OF MANN**

**AS I**walked through the grey inhospitable monolith of Broadcasting House I see the other DJs (packing themselves on the back for cracking jokes, shooting lines), yet hiding behind an insincere facade which is as fragile as an egg-shell.

I move into an office area and on my left is someone who looks reserved, a little shy, his initial embarrassment hidden beneath a neatly trimmed beard. He smiles coyly, we exchange banalities and suddenly as I begin conversation I realise John Peel is a little different. The man least likely to..... he's not the one dimensional person with the gift of the gab, but a warm human being.

John Peel was born on August 30th 1939, four days before the outbreak of war, in a place called Heswell, Cheshire. He then went to live the first seventeen years of his life in Burton on De.. At the age of seven he went to his boarding school near Deganwy (North Wales) and at the age of thirteen went to Shrewsbury public school, going on to do six months in the Cotton Exchange at Liverpool before going to do his National Service in the Royal Artillery (which he hasn't got many fond memories of), as a gunner.

When he came out of the army he went to work in a cotton mill in Rochdale "which I thoroughly enjoyed, possibly the best six months of my life". In 1960 he went to the land of golden dreams America, and got heavily involved in the music world until 1967 when he worked for six months on pirate radio station — Radio London. Finally in that year, he joined Radio One and has been working for them ever since.

With all this experience I asked John which music made the first big impact on him? "The first records I heard where my dad's dance band records from the 1930s. I then started buying my own records people like Johnny Ray and Frankie Laine, but when I heard my first rock 'n' Roll records Elvis Presley and Little Richard, it really quite transformed my life because I thought this is what I have been waiting for all these years, and from that point on I spent most of my money on records and still, to a certain extent, do".

## Texas

**W**hy did you go to America? "I went to work in the cotton industry because my father was a cotton broker in Liverpool and he sent me to visit one of his business acquaintances in Dallas, Texas, where they exploited the fact that I hadn't got a work permit and used me as cheap labour. So there was myself and these two black blokes who used to work from 8 o'clock in the morning until midnight almost every day. These blokes used to take me off from work and go to clubs in Hall Street, the main black Street in Dallas and we used to hear some really good people like BB King, Lighting Hopkins, and Howlin Wolf. It never occurred to me until I made a few white mates as well that I was the only white person down there".



Where does the ill-fated Daidisium Records that you and Clive Selwood set-up fit into this? "That I started in 1967 when I was on the pirate Radio London. A lot of the records I used to play were Elektra and we got together and decided to start a label with the idea that it was going to be the co-operative label that everyone talks of, and we were not going to make any money out of it, it was going to be a genuine labour of love.

"We recorded 28 LPs and virtually the same number of singles. Most were unsuccessful except for the Medicine Head single "Pictures In The Sky" which got into the charts

## Soinds

**D**oes your passionate interest in music extend to your home? "It has to really, because I have to spend most of my life playing records. My wife — The Pig and my little sprogs have to put up with it. I used to do a lot of writing for Sounds, The Listener and Punch, but I just haven't got time now.

"It's ludicrous how many demo tapes I have to listen to; we got 43 in one day recently. The Pig takes quite an interest, she listens to the programmes. But when she especially expresses an interest then I know something must be good. She's a great Beatles fan, she's about 10 years younger than me, and when I first played Teenage Kicks by The Undertones she came in and said 'that's the best record that I've heard since the Beatles'."

## Misty

**C**hris Bolton and Misty called you the only genuine DJ on the radio, what do you say to that?

"I am very flattered to hear that, because I admire Misty beyond all reason. I did a gig with them in Nottingham, but I'm basically a very shy bloke, and bands make me feel insecure, any band which has strong political and social convictions. I felt very excluded, which was my fault. I just want to go up to them and say what you do is just tremendous, but you just feel such a wanker in a situation like that."

## Socialist

**W**hat is your relationship with your Radio One colleagues at roadshows, and charity football matches for example?

"It's funny I was just talking about this the other night: I do feel very much excluded, I think they feel I take it all rather too seriously, and they regard me as being like the ancient mariner and over the years I've invited an enormous number to stay if they are in the East Anglia area. None of them ever come, and if they have parties they never invite me, and like anyone would, I feel rather hurt by this."

Many people including myself, see your role as a DJ as promoting independant records that would never see the light of day, and this coupled with your radical stance makes you so important.

"Well does it? The thing is, by having a 'radical' stance you can be seen to be part of the establishment, because they can point to you and say we are a liberal regime because we allow this to take place! I have obviously strong political

beliefs of a socialist nature and I hope this is reflected in the choice of the music. I don't think the BBC encourages me to go and do political speeches, and I don't think I am qualified to do it. People like the romantic figure of man alone, battling against the heathen hell, but I don't want to be romantic figure."

What songs still leave the deepest impression on you?

"The Fall's 'Elastic Man', The Undertones' 'Teenage Kicks', which still knocks me out, but it depends on my mood. If I'm feeling nostalgic my all time favourite record is 'Peter Gunn' by Duane Eddy, which moves me to tears every time I hear it."

## Tears

**W**hy is reggae your all time favourite music?

"It's true, but when you see it written down it looks so stupid, like Bob Hope saying all the obvious kind of things to make people who are reading it think you're such a good bloke. I want people to think I'm a good bloke and I think I'm quite a nice bloke. Reggae has an element of mystery involved in it, which is impenetrable as a white, middle-class bloke. The introduction to the Misty In Roots album is another thing that brings tears to my eyes, because it sums up in a way everything I would like people to think I do.

## Naked

**W**hat was your initial reaction to New Wave, because I've been listening to you on and off since 1975 (You won't hear much with your radio ear — ed.) and in '77 jazz-rock and funkier music went and the show was turned on its head.

"When I first heard The Raincoats LP I wasn't sure, but I played about five tracks on the show and I got an enormous amount of complaints. Then I went to see the Damned and realised this was the same thing happening to me then happened when I was 15 and went to see Little Richard, the strength and power was almost intimidating at first, you were frightened to approach it. I don't mean this in a sexist way, but it was like seeing some enormously attractive woman, you were frightened by their appearance. It is feeling distanced from it initially. Over a period of a few weeks I was converted by it. People thought it was naked opportunism, jumping on bandwagons, and for six and nine months it was terribly unpopular, the audience figures dropped like a stone, because all the people who wanted me to go on playing Grateful Dead LPs were not at all happy about it. But it was an important kick up the arse of the music business."



## Hostesses

**J**ust before you went to see the Liverpool game you seemed very depressed, almost tearful. What brought this about?

"I get depressed like human beings do, and this is a depressing time in which we live. It has been always part of a DJ's brief to be eternally cheerful, but that, to me, is being insulting to your audience. Because you are lying to them in a way. Wednesday nights are usually my worst, I don't know why. Most evenings after 5.30 everyone goes home, and I'm left on the floor here, playing records and tapes, and it's not a cheering thing. If this communicates itself to people then it is not unfortunate, it's just the way things are. I'm not going to fake my off-nights, and pretend I'm feeling terrific. I've been ill from over work, and people never believe this, they think I spend all my life in cocktail bars with airline hostesses. The short holiday and Liverpool's victory went a long way in picking me up.

## Bolan

**A**s far as musicians are concerned, they become divorced from reality, because it is their manager or whoever who is the only one they have to talk to. The best example in my life was Mark Bolan who was likely my best mate for about three years, and then suddenly over night I never saw him again, he moved in with a different crowd, and was embarrassed to be with me, which was upsetting."

## Bloody awful

**T**alking about the glib Stereotype DJ John continues: "It's not in my nature. I don't get asked for my autograph often because I don't think people who listen to the programme feel that way about me. The nicest compliment I was ever paid in a way, was a couple of seasons ago, a boring game and at half time I was having a piss against the wall when this fella came up and peed alongside me said 'that was a bloody awful programme on Wednesday Peely'. I just thought that was really nice, he knows who I am and it doesn't matter he doesn't want my autograph for his daughter, it was like I was just like a friend he knew in the pub and I was really flattered by that."

## Pig

**K**enny Dalglish is the best footballer John has seen in his life: "I was going to bring the children down and have him bless them. But the Pig said she didn't think he'd understand this. On Sunday I took her to the place behind Granada TV where you can look through a hole in a gate and there is the Rover's Return."

He met his love Sheena Easton and liked her a lot, it leads him to another person he knew: "John Lennon was the sort of funny bloke I would have liked to have gone to the match with. I just wish he hadn't gone to America, wish he hadn't been a Beatle, and obviously wish he hadn't died.

## Marley

**W**hat appalls me is the terrible overdone sentimentality that surrounds the death of these people, where everyone who never paid attention to what they did for years suddenly pretends that they've always adored everything they did. This was best exemplified for me on BBC's World Service, when they did this long eulogy about Lennon and then said let's listen to those immortal melodies from the man, and played the Beatles doing a Chuck Berry song.

"Marley I only met once in the early Seventies, when he recorded a couple of sessions for the programme. Again there is so much hypocrisy involved. At one time your hard-core reggae buffs rather disavowed the Wailers, but now they are all saying Bob Marley is the voice of us all. We knew he was going to die, but he made marvelous records and certainly made it possible for me to be able to play reggae records on the radio."

## Chilling

**H**e goes on: "Perhaps one of the most emotional things I ever received was a letter from Ian Curtis' dad, after his death last Christmas, which was a really, proud, strong letter, which I shall keep and every time I feel sorry for myself and depressed I shall take that letter out and read it, and realise the tragedy of not being understood, and not being able to communicate to other people. That line 'A Loaded Gun Won't Set You Free... So They Say' — what a chilling prophecy, and obviously very sad. Like Hendrix and Gene Vincent, a demon behind the microphone, but docile and screwed up away from it."

## Daily mask

**J**ohn tugs at his beard and leans forward, with an expression of welling up emotion. I realise that maybe I'm making him bear his soul to the extent of vulnerability. I smile as if to say 'sorry for this', and think how open, kind, and bloody funny he's been. He has completely rejected Tom Stoppard's famous dictum "Oh Lord give us today our daily mask" about people's public image. Peely is not going to change for anyone. He's the sort of bloke you'd go out with for a drink, and a laugh, the sort of guy who makes you feel alright, because his human weaknesses are the same as your's. Nobody's perfect, nobody's an untouchable, he's Peel — take him, or leave him .....





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